

## U.S. Embassy Muscat

### Webchat on Student Visas, January 29, 2012

**Erin (Public Affairs):** Good morning, everyone! Thank you for joining us this morning. My name is Erin and I work in the Public Affairs Section here at the U.S. Embassy. I am pleased to introduce our Vice Consul, Christian, who is here to answer any questions you may have on student visas to the U.S. Also, we are joined by Walaa, our Information Resource Director, who will be assisting us with moderating the webchat.

**Christian (Consular):** Hi, Everyone. Is everyone here interested in studying in the U.S.? Does anyone know what they want to study?

**Question:** I have been accepted to the Pennsylvania State University. What do I do next?

**Christian (Consular):** Hi, Muna. First thing you need to do is pay the SEVIS fee at the following website: <http://www.ice.gov/sevis/i901/>

**Christian (Consular):** The SEVIS fee for most student visas is USD 200.

**Christian (Consular):** Next, you should go to our website and fill out the online application form for a visa at the following address:

[http://oman.usembassy.gov/comp\\_submit\\_appl.html](http://oman.usembassy.gov/comp_submit_appl.html)

**Question:** OK, Thanks!

**Walaa (IRC Director):** I will be adding all the links that Christian provides down at the "Helpful Links" section for your reference.

**Christian (Consular):** Next, print out the completed application and make an appointment for an interview at our embassy in Muscat.

**Question:** Hi, thank you for this meeting. I'm interested in studying in the USA for civil engineering. I have had communications with 3 universities and may try to enroll in the start of 2013. Does my visa expire if I acquire it too early from the embassy?

**Christian (Consular):** Hi, Mostafa. Are you planning to visit the States before choosing where to study? Because that would be a different kind of a visa, a tourist visa.

**Christian (Consular):** Once you have been accepted then you begin the process for applying for a specific student visa.

**Question:** What do I need to have at the interview?

**Christian (Consular):** Please bring your I-20 form (provided to you by the school that you have been accepted to), a receipt of payment for the SEVIS fee, transcripts for your most recent school, and proof of how you intend to pay for your studies. You must be able to show at least enough funds to cover the first year of studies or a scholarship letter to cover the costs.

**Question:** I just want to go for university, but a friend said if you get a USA visa and wait too long to travel that it expires. Then you have to start the process again and it causes delays. How early before start of university do I apply?

**Christian (Consular):** We encourage you to apply early, however we cannot issue you a visa earlier than 30 days before the start date of your classes.

**Christian (Consular):** Also, once your visa has been issued, you are free to travel to the US until the expiration date of your visa.

**Question:** Hi! I was accepted to one school, and I got my visa. I thought the process was easy, thank you for that. But now I realize I would like to go to a different school, and I have just learned I am accepted there too. Can I just go to my new school?

**Christian (Consular):** Hi, Layla. You must apply for a new visa indicating the new school you plan to attend. Bring an I-20 from your new school and begin the application process again.

**Question:** Do I have to pay more money?

**Christian (Consular):** Yes. You must pay the application fee again. However, you do NOT need to pay for a new SEVIS fee as long as the I-20 has the same SEVIS number.

**Question:** Thank you.

**Christian (Consular):** You are welcome.

**Question:** How do I get a scholarship?

**Erin (Public Affairs):** The Fulbright Scholarship program is one of our most prominent scholarship programs for graduate study in the U.S. You can find out more information about the Fulbright at <http://oman.usembassy.gov/educational-exchange/flbrt stdnt.html>. Also, we have a number of short-term exchange programs, such as the NESU Undergraduate and Study of the U.S. Institute (SUSI). You can find more information about those programs here: <http://oman.usembassy.gov/educational-exchange.html>

**Erin (Public Affairs):** I would also add that AMIDEAST Oman offers free educational advising services through the U.S. State Department EducationUSA network. Information

can be found here: <http://www.amideast.org/oman/advising/educationusa-free-advising-services>

**Question:** I want to attend a community college in the United States. Is this possible?

**Christian (Consular):** Hi, Mohammed. Yes, it is possible.

**Christian (Consular):** You can apply to any community college you would like and follow the same instructions I explained before to apply for a student visa.

**Question:** Do I need the same forms as a 4 year university, be accepted and show proof of finances?

**Christian (Consular):** Yes, you do. Everything is the same.

**Erin (Public Affairs):** Thanks for logging in today! We'll have another webchat about student visas on Sunday, February 26. Please spread the word to your friends and colleagues. We look forward to seeing you then! Bye!

**Christian (Consular):** Bye, everyone!

**Walaa (IRC Director):** Thank you everyone and see you in a month!